

doubt that Medicare costs over the last 10 years have not grown as quickly as they have in the private sector. But that, in part, is because we are continuing to do what I just said we do not want to do any more. We do not want to pass Medicare costs on to the private sector. We do not want to say, in the name of reform, all we are going to do is let the private sector take on greater responsibility for health costs.

We have to solve the problem of skyrocketing costs in the private sector, as well as those costs in Government. And that is exactly what I said this morning and what I hope we can continue to focus on as we consider the Medicare debate.

DAVID PRYOR: A TRUE PUBLIC SERVANT

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I could not help but listen to the distinguished Senator from Arkansas just a moment ago. All of us will greatly regret his absence beginning in the next Congress.

As we all know, last week, the distinguished Senator from Arkansas, Senator PRYOR, announced his plans to retire.

As the Senate Democratic leader, I feel like pleading with him not to go; to change his mind.

What we heard just this afternoon was another illustration of the value that he is to all of us, the unique individual that he truly is.

While he has been known around town as one of the President's closest friends on Capitol Hill, he is one of my most indispensable allies in the Senate and one of the closest friends that most of us have here in the Senate.

I have constantly drawn on his experience and wisdom for advice and guidance. And I have constantly found his calming influence amidst many a Senate tempest to be essential for my own personal well being as well as that of the U.S. Senate.

But while I recognize that he is a kind, southern gentleman of the first order, I also warn, do not let that calm demeanor fool you. In the Senate, there is not a more tenacious or aggressive fighter for the causes in which he believes than DAVID PRYOR.

Shortly after his election to the House of Representatives, Congressman PRYOR went undercover as an orderly to investigate conditions in nursing homes. When the House refused to conduct hearings on the plight of America's elderly, he rounded up volunteers from local colleges, rented a trailer, and conducted his own hearings in an abandoned gas station a few blocks away from the House Office Building. When the Speaker of the House refused to establish a Committee on Aging, then-Congressman PRYOR turned his trailer into the ad hoc House Trailer Committee on the Aging and continued its investigation.

The House finally established—to no surprise of anyone who watched all of this—a Select Committee on Aging.

When OPM claimed to have cleaned up its act and made Government jobs accessible to all applicants, Senator PRYOR sent his office interns down to that agency to apply for jobs.

He then called them to testify before his Subcommittee on Federal Services, where they informed the Senate about the continuing abuses in that most important Federal job recruiting agency. The list does not end.

He has taken on the IRS and authored and steered to passage the taxpayers' bill of rights to make our tax system fair and equitable to every citizen and every business.

He has taken on the Beltway Bandits, as he has conducted hearings and demanded more than 40 GAO reports on Government use of what he calls America's shadow government—private consultants.

He has taken on the pharmaceutical companies for the high prices they charge for prescription drugs.

He has stopped production of unsafe and unworkable chemical weapons, even though it meant jobs in his State of Arkansas.

He has conducted a longstanding crusade against what he considers time-consuming and time-wasting Senate procedures like filibusters, dilatory floor tactics, quorum calls, and extended rollcall votes.

But throughout his fights, Senator PRYOR has remained the gentleman that he is. His fights have always been constructive, not destructive, to the national interest. We need more, not less, positive-minded, cooperative, dedicated Senators like DAVID PRYOR.

While I am tempted to ask him to stay, as his friend, I fully understand and support his reason for leaving.

He has given a lifetime of public service. As a teenager, he worked in Washington, first as a page for Representative Oren Harris, and then in the post office in the House of Representatives.

He had successful careers as an editor-publisher and as an attorney, but he always came back to public service. In 1960, he was elected to the first of three terms in the Arkansas State Legislature.

In 1966, he was elected to the first of four terms in the U.S. House of Representatives. He served two terms as Governor of Arkansas.

Since 1979, he has served in the U.S. Senate. His work in this Chamber has consumed so much of his time and attention. In addition to his most important work as chairman of the Special Committee on Aging, he has been active on the Finance Committee, the Committee on Agriculture, the Joint Committee on the Organization of Congress, the Governmental Affairs Committee. And, yes, even the Ethics Committee.

In addition to all that, he has also served as Democratic Conference secretary.

Senator PRYOR now wants to enjoy life after politics—and there is much to

say for that kind of life. Senator Mitchell told me so just the other day.

Senator PRYOR's love for the Senate is exceeded only by his love for his family and his love for the beautiful State of Arkansas—both of which he will now be able to enjoy even more. I wish Senator PRYOR, Barbara, and his family the best in the years ahead and can only say that their gain is our loss.

I yield the floor.

Mr. DOLE addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

Mr. DOLE. Mr. President, what is the pending business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The pending business is H.R. 956, and the Gorton amendment is the pending amendment.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. DOLE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there now be a period for morning business until 5:30 p.m., with Senators allowed to speak for not to exceed 5 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DOLE. Mr. President, last month, the Medicare Board of Trustees issued its annual report. Four members of this committee are appointees of President Clinton—three of them currently serve in his Cabinet.

The trustees concluded that Medicare will begin to go broke next year, and will be completely bankrupt by the year 2002.

If this were to occur, no payments, by law, can be made by Medicare to pay for hospital care or for any other services paid for by the trust fund.

Thirty-three million seniors and four million disabled individuals depend on the Medicare Program every year.

It is for them, and for those who will follow, that we must commit to preserving, improving, and protecting the Medicare Program.

Tuesday, the Speaker of the House and I extended a verbal invitation to President Clinton to sit down with us and to begin working on a bipartisan plan to preserve, improve, and protect Medicare.

Judging from the President's actions in the past weeks, and from remarks he delivered earlier yesterday at the White House Conference on Aging, it appears that the President has once again chosen partisanship over leadership.

Instead of heeding the advice from his trustees, the President heeded the advice of his political pollsters, using yesterday's speech as an opportunity to engage in scare tactics and to mislead America's seniors.

Nevertheless, Speaker GINGRICH and I are willing to give the President the benefit of the doubt. Perhaps he did not watch the news Tuesday evening or read the paper yesterday morning. Perhaps no one at the White House told him of our invitation.